

Gila/Pinal Workforce Investment Area and Workforce Investment Board Dissolution and Realignment Background Information

The Gila/Pinal (Counties) Workforce Investment Area Board of Directors currently has 26 Board members from various geographical locations of Gila and Pinal Counties with the biggest majority representing businesses from the areas. In addition, our education and partnering agencies advise on issues such as training pertinent to the participants from our areas. The three main programs of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) are the youth program, adult program and re-employment-rapid response.

Gila County has been the contracting agency for this program since the inception of the Gila/Pinal WIA program in the late 1990s.

In the beginning, both Gila County and Pinal County were very much alike, both very rural counties with more similarities than differences. Currently Pinal County has grown to over 300,000 in population and has endured many “growing pains.”

Several years ago some Pinal County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) members started a discussion that perhaps Pinal County should separate from Gila County or become the lead agency in the Gila/Pinal consortium. Since then the program administrators have been updating the programs and engaging the Board members on a different level. In September 2013, the Gila/Pinal WIB decided to vote upon continuing the current Workforce Investment Area. It was decided that Gila County would remain as the contracting agency. Since that time, and due to a change in administration and a change in the Pinal County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, discussions have re-opened regarding whether or not Pinal County should separate from Gila County. Pinal County members went to our lead state agency stating that they wanted to break off and join with the Maricopa County Workforce Area.

Gila County and Pinal County both met with the Department of Economic Security and the State Commerce Authority strategizing on the impending split. Gila County visited two local workforce areas; one in southeastern Arizona and one in northeastern Arizona, to determine whether or not other WIA Workforce Investment Areas would be interested in allowing Gila County to join their Area.

After meeting with the WIB Director and some other WIB members of the Navajo and Apache Counties Workforce Investment Area, Gila County staff has determined that the Navajo and Apache Counties Workforce Investment Area would be the most advantageous to Gila County residents. Our County Manager has spoken to both County Managers of Navajo and Apache Counties and they welcomed the addition of Gila County to their Workforce Investment Area. We have informed the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the Arizona Commerce Authority pending the Gila County Board of Supervisors’ approval of the potential merger.